

*Civilisation and Races of Southern
Italy* 383

metal, if not unknown to the West,
was yet
practised at its highest perfection
among the
Greeks, and Desiderius, in sending to
the Byzantine capital to have the work executed,
paid tribute
to the superior civilisation of the
Greeks, which
retained its hegemony over Italy still.
Leo of
Ostia describes the procuring of the
bronze doors
almost as if it were a delicate
diplomatic mission.*
The abbot sent a monk to
Constantinople with
letters of recommendation to Michael
VII. and
thirty pounds of gold along with him,
for the
purpose of having made by Greek
workmen,
along with the metal doors, an enamel
facing for
the high altar of the Basilica,
representing stories
from the Bible. The Emperor proving
gracious,
two gates of bronze were cast in
Constantinople,
and being brought over sea to Monte
Cassino,
were placed on either side of the
great altar,
enclosing the choir: before the altar
there was then
hung a great beam of bronze carrying
fifty can-
delabra of the same metal, under which
again hung
thirty lamps. The church, as
completed, con-
tained also a pulpit or "ambone" of
timber,
built with steps of gold and
adorned with
mosaics.

The famous bronze doors of Monte
Cassino
still exist to show that at that age
metal work,

* Leo Ostiensis, *Chron. Cas.*, lib. Hi., c, 33, AT. &
#• SS._t t.
vii., p. 574 seq., and *Narratiode consecrations*, . . ,
ecchsia Cas-
sinensis., ed Migne, *Pvtrologia Latino.*, vol. clxxiii.
See also
Tosti, *op. cit.* y vol. i, pp. 339-40. The year was
1071.